



Patrolman D.R. (Dick) Wills, a graduate of the Texas A&M Law Enforcement and Security Training School who currently works for the Bryan Police Department, demonstrates two techniques for taking aim in proper gun handling.

by ANGELIQUE COPELAND

Battalion Staff

A can of green smoke and a cylinder of tear gas go off in a small shed. Instead of running away, 19 men run into the fog, one at a time.

They are not being pursued by the law, they are the law.

They are policemen going through basic training at the Texas A&M Law Enforcement and Security Training School.

The cadets emerge from the shed coughing, eyes reddened and streaming. Standing with hands behind their backs so as not to rub their already irritated eyes, they face the wind trying to blow the effects of the gas away.

Lt. Gene Knowles of the Bryan Police Department is the man who sent them in to the noxious cloud.

"I don't do it to be mean," Knowles said. "Every peace officer ought to know how gas is going to affect the people he uses it on."

"Police don't use the gas very often. Law enforcement does the best job gassing each other."

Knowles is a certified Basic Training and Special Weapons and Tactics training officer. He teaches control of civil disorders and traffic direction at the school.

Officers who attend the school for basic training come in all ages; from 18, fresh out of high school, to a retired master plumber turned cop.

Dan Condon had been a master plumber for 20 years when he decided to become a game warden. Now at 44, Condon is going through the same basic training as Tom

Randall, 18, to meet the state requirements for a Texas peace officer. Both men work for the Bureson County Sheriff's Office.

Another student, Santos Alvarez, has been working with the Brazos County Sheriff's Offices in communications for the last year and a half.

Before that, Alvarez had been a police officer for two and one half years in Oklahoma City. He must still be recertified in a Texas police training school.

"Every state has some type of police training," said Bill Cooksey, assistant training specialist at the school. "We recognize some out-of-state departments and require only a minimum of requalifying, but 40 hours of Texas criminal and traffic law is always mandatory."

Alvarez said he thought it was beneficial to go back through the basic training school.

"Not only do I need to learn Texas law, but even though most techniques are similar to what I learned when I went to school, some have been updated," Alvarez said.

First-hand knowledge of tear gas is only a small part of the 240-hour curriculum students go through at the training center.

Studies range from the history of law enforcement to first aid, motor vehicle laws, accident investigation and public speaking.

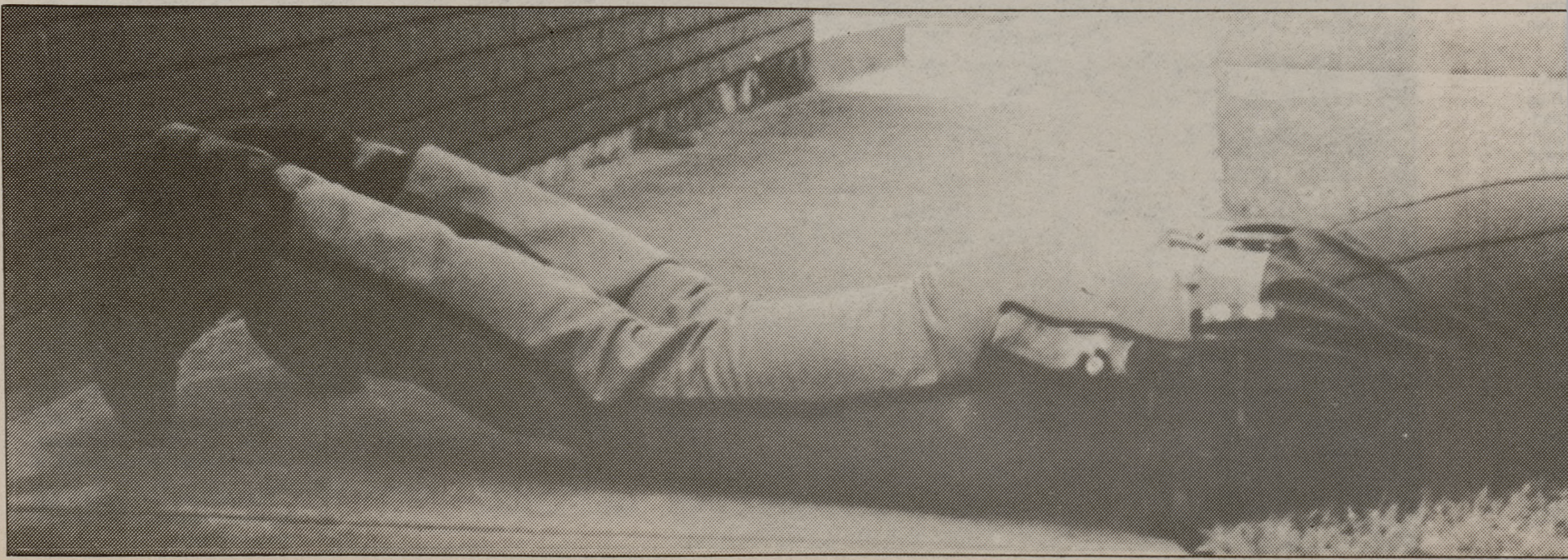
Beginning Jan. 1, 1981, the state will require an additional 40 hours of study in both traffic law enforcement and traffic investigation.

"There was a time when there wasn't any law enforcement training except what was provided by the state agencies," said Cooksey, a 23-year police veteran.

"In local law enforcement, all the training they got was 'on-the-job' training."

After the creation of the Texas Commission of Law Enforcement Standards and Education in 1954, Cooksey said a statewide curriculum was set up that all peace officers in Texas must complete within

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